

Sound



Waves

Magazine

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**Volume 32
Issue 3
March 2022**

**An
Interview
with the**



FRANKLIN BOTHERS

Plus

- Neil Young
- Eric Krasno
- The Wildroots
- Speedfossil
- Sakis Zachariades
- Craig Edwards
- Sue Menhart

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INSIDE THE WAVE

Music Notes	Pg. 4
Gramma's Attic	Pg. 6
Band Dates	Pg. 8
Cover Story.....	Pg. 10
Local Beat.....	Pg. 14
Bar Fly	Pg. 16
Hearing Aid.....	Pg. 18
Dining Out	Pg. 20
Classified.....	Pg. 26



MAILBAG

Dear Readers,

There feels like there's a change in the air. That life is about to get back to normal. People are starting to go out. Out to listen to live music. Out to enjoy a good dinner. Out to socialize again! After what we went thru the last 2 years, we need a change.

Sound Waves has always been here to help you find out where to go to enjoy your night out. We struggled like many others. Those that supported us were closed or having a hard time day to day. But now we are all coming back. So get out there and enjoy life!

This magazine has been free for 32 years! And it's all because of the advertisers. So help us continue and be sure to tell the advertisers within these pages that you saw their ad here. Maybe even tell some others that they should advertise in Sound Waves. Support local businesses!

Till next Month
David Pottie - Publisher

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Sound Waves

March 2022

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Health Concerns Prompt Permanent Cancellation of Rhythm & Roots

CHARLESTOWN, RI – The annual Rhythm & Roots festival, a Rhode Island musical tradition for more than two decades, is ending. The family business that handles all aspects of the Labor Day weekend festival has suspended operations. Producer Chuck Wentworth said health issues led the family to reconsider their plan to hold the three-day festival this year – its 24th in Ninigret Park in Charlestown. Artists had been booked for Sept. 2, 3, and 4, and tickets were scheduled to go on sale at the end of this month, but he felt cancellation was the wisest move now and in the future.

“After consulting with my doctors and my family, we’ve decided that I should step away from festival production for health issues that have taken their toll for the past 12 years,” Wentworth said. Rhythm & Roots took a one-year hiatus in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic and returned in 2021 after Wentworth’s Lagniappe Productions implemented the necessary health and safety protocols. However, Wentworth suffered a major medical event during the festival that landed him in the hospital for two days causing him to miss most of the festival that he had planned for two years. “The consensus of all involved is that I must step away from festival production immediately.”

The Annual Rhythm & Roots Music, Dance, and Food Festival attracts musicians from a range of musical styles – Cajun, soul, bluegrass, swing, country, and gospel among them. Headliners over the last few years alone have included John Hiatt, Rosanne Cash, Keb’ Mo’, Taj Mahal, Richard Thompson, and Steve Earle.

Dozens of musicians perform on three stages. Over 1,000 campers, including food vendors, artisans, and families, make Ninigret Park home for three days. More than 300 volunteers – the majority of whom return year after year – help run the festival with Wentworth, his wife Deb, their children, grandchildren, and extended family.

The success of the festival is the result of Wentworth’s passion for every genre of roots music, a learn-as-you-go attitude, and trust. Festival-goers buy their tickets before the lineup is announced because they know Wentworth will put on a varied show of longtime favorites and up-and-coming talent. Volunteers sign up in wintertime to transform the sleepy park into a musical village and keep it running every Labor Day weekend.

My main focus was always, and still is, just on the music – the production and the quality of what we were doing – but being the sole owner of an independent, family-run festival,

CONTINUED PAGE 7

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MUSIC NOTES

“The Soul of Sound Waves Returns”

By Mark T. Gould

She's back.

Finally and thankfully.

She's back.

Following the dark days of the pandemic and a time of musical inactivity, Sue Menhart, songwriter, musician, and writer extraordinaire, is returning to the pages of Sound Waves Magazine.

And, just like that, the quality of an already well-written (well, maybe except for me) and edited magazine, hits the stratosphere.

For me, the way Menhart plays, and especially the way she writes, makes her both the conscious and the soul of music and nightlife in southeastern Connecticut, which just happens to be Sound Waves' home base.

Her memoir, “They Made Me Play a Polka,” and her album, “Love Ain't Hard,” are both hard hitting, yet poignant, observations of what life is like, both on stage, and off.

You've heard of “Springsteen on Broadway?”

Believe me, she's so talented that she could perform “Mehart at the Garde” without breaking a sweat.

Both of those breathtaking releases, “Polka,” in 2018, and “Love,” from 2017, obviously predate the pandemic, which has turned an already volatile music scene six ways from sideways.

So, how did Menhart get through it?

Just like everything else, straight on with a bit of humor mixed in.

“I spent quality time with my daughter who moved in for most of the pandemic,” she told me recently in discussing her return. “We cooked, and laughed, and cooked some more.”

“I bought a boat so I could nautically distance, (and) I read as many books as I could to escape the reality,” she added. “I sold everything in my house, including musical gear, that I no longer needed in any way.”

“When there was a lull in the pandemic in June of 2021, and we all thought it was over, my daughter and I went to L.A. so I could visit some of my old stomping grounds. We ate fresh mango every day and enjoyed southern California perfect weather for a week,” Menhart said. “After the summer, I started taking Tai Chi, Yoga and Zumba classes and going to the gym. I did not touch my guitar, or even look at it, from the day the bars shut down in March 2020 (I had a gig that very night).”

Of course, for her fans (including me, big time), saying that she did not touch her guitar might seem sad, but some positiveness seems to have come out of her musical downtime, she said.

“(I) woke up one day and felt compelled to get my acoustic guitar out of the basement,” Menhart told me. “I heard a melody, wrote some lyrics to it, added chords. Finished five songs in a week.”

Whew.

“The Sue Menhart Band has not rehearsed or gigged since December 2019,” she added. “We usually slow down a little in the winter months, but this has been quite the long break!”

“But, we will have a sit down, and we plan on recording another album.”

Double whew.

And, as with everything else, musically and otherwise, whirling around her, Menhart puts her singularly unique observation on what the pandemic has done to the music industry, and how



she thinks it's going coming out of it.

“I think post pandemic, music listeners will be looking for more meaning behind music – songs that matter,” she said. “They will look for and follow artists who don't necessarily fit into any mold, but with whom they identify with, whether it be the artists' message, lifestyle, or style of music.”

“I believe the days of 100K+ stadium live concerts will dwindle, and mid-level and smaller intimate venues for live music will become the norm,” she added. “That feeling of collectively experiencing a live music act where everyone in the room is at some level an adoring fan, will never go away.”

“I believe there will be a more diverse catalog of artists readily available to be heard on outlier radio and streaming platforms, without the artists needing to have contracts with the “big machine” of labels. I believe artists will fight even harder for this right to be heard by the masses.”

And, with my fan fingers crossed, I asked her about her plans for resuming writing for Sound Waves.



"I plan to write pieces worthy of our readership's time," she said.

Just like she's always done.

Welcome home, Sue!!
She's back.



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GRAMMA'S ATTIC REVUE

"Americana Roots and Then Some A Chat with Craig Edwards"

By Gramma

I made my first mistake when I assumed Craig Edwards was Irish. I have known Craig as a local musician and friend for several years now, and always thought his roots were in the Irish heritage. In our conversation, I learned that it is not his heritage, but his passion, that makes him so good at all the music he shares with this community.

Craig was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, and it was there that he got deeply rooted in music and the many facets of it that he is so immersed in. We tried to record our interview on Zoom, as the snow, sleet and freezing rain kept us from meeting face to face, but I was not able to go back into the recording. Needless to say, I will make do with the six pages of notes I took during our conversation.

In 1978 Craig came to Connecticut to attend Wesleyan University, where he studied Ethnomusicology. In 1983 he applied for a job as a staff musician at Mystic Seaport, where he met his future wife. He says that it was "interest at first sight," but it was several years before that interest became the marriage that it is today.

When asked about his music style, Craig recounted the tale of the Blind Men and the Elephant. The story goes that several blind men were brought to encounter an elephant for the first time. One, upon touching the leg, said that the elephant was like a tree. The second, upon feeling the side of the elephant, said it was like a wall, the third felt the ear and said, "No, it's like a fan!", the fourth said, "Like a giant snake!" when he found the trunk, and the final man felt the elephant's tail and

6 SOUND WAVES



said that the elephant was like a rope. Now, none of these men were wrong, but they couldn't see the whole picture. He has learned to embrace and take a deep dive into every style of music that he has been exposed to.

Craig says that before music was recorded, people only heard music when it was played in front of them, and communities developed their own ways of playing music that reflected the music they heard around them, creating regional styles. As people traveled and encountered the music of other communities, they mimicked new sounds, and different styles evolved. As we look at all the styles Craig has invested his life in learning how to play, we can see how his journey traces those earlier encounters.

Craig has an extensive history of learning music from people in many places: Appalachia, Nova Scotia, Ireland, Louisiana, France, and here in New England. Starting out playing Appalachian music and blues, he learned Irish and Nova Scotian music to play for New England contradances, and first encountered Cajun music at the Cajun and Bluegrass Festival at Stepping Stone Ranch in Escoheag, Rhode Island. Having traveled to Louisiana and mastered Cajun and Zydeco on button accordion, his band the Zydecats became a mainstay in the

dance tent at that festival right through its transformation into the Labor Day weekend Rhythm and Roots Festival. He worked for a time at Mystic Seaport Museum playing historical maritime music that was played by sailors, including the songs called chanteys which coordinated effort at work.

Craig is a multi-instrumentalist who plays fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin, and yes, button accordion. You would think that a man with this much talent would want to get out there on the road and make a national name for himself. While over the years he's done some touring, playing in Europe every summer through much of the 1990s and early 2000s, and playing dances, concerts and festivals on shorter tours in the US, it is with a fair amount of passion that Craig explains that this was not the case for him. Craig wanted to be part of his community. He wanted to play in his community with other musicians in his community. He plays solo and with several bands, and teaches private lessons on fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin, and button accordion. He also teaches for the Evergreen Community Music Program at Pine Point School in Stonington, and will be teaching fiddle at Banjo Camp North in Massachusetts on May 13-15. For more information on lessons you can find him at www.fiddlecraig.com. He can also be reached at fiddlecraig@gmail.com.

Craig leads a weekly Old Time (Appalachian) music session every Wednesday from 6-9:30pm at The Barn on Fort Hill Road in Groton (a weekly session that's run for over 20 years, starting at the Captain Daniel Packer Inn in Mystic, then held at John's Cafe until it closed, at The Social in New London until the pandemic, and for a while at Brian Brothers' Bayou BBQ and Grill before moving to the Barn in January 2022). He also plays at the Stonington Farmer's Market at the Velvet Mill every Saturday morning.

Craig currently with old time/blues band the Root Farmers, Irish band Green Wind, and plays fiddle, mandolin, and button accordion in the original Americana/roots music band Sweet Mercy, led by songwriter/guitarist John Speziale, featuring Sandman Allen on mandolin and lap steel and Jaime Duquette on bass. Sweet Mercy has a

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CD of John's original songs in production, and will be playing at the Knickerbocker Taproom on March 31 and the Mystic Aquarium on April 21.

On March 19th, Craig Edwards will be appearing on The Gramma's Attic Music Revue on your local cable channel 24 at 10pm. And guess what? He'll be playing Irish music!

I hope that you get a chance to get out for some local music soon. Until next month, check out the dates that I have listed, wear your mask, stay safe, and support local music.



RHYTHM & ROOTS CONTINUED

I had to become a businessman also and learn how to handle all the financial aspects of Rhythm & Roots to keep it more stable." Wentworth takes pride in the fact that Rhythm & Roots has remained independent and relatively small while the musical landscape has changed dramatically. Music festivals are growing larger and are run more commonly by major corporations. Family-run producers, faced with exponential costs and numerous other obstacles, are finding it difficult to compete.

In this case, Wentworth's health was the obstacle that finally put the brakes on a well-loved annual tradition for thousands of roots music enthusiasts. Wentworth said he and his wife will miss their festival family of volunteers and fans, and the reunion-like vibe of the event, which has been a huge part of their lives for decades. "Deb and I are forever indebted to all of you for sticking with us. We will always cherish every one of you who attended Rhythm & Roots over the past 24 years. You won't be forgotten, and we hope our paths will cross again."





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2,9,16,23 - Ryan's Pub, Canterbury, CT 7-10pm
 4 - Kinsmen Brewing, Milldale, CT 8-11pm
 5 - Strings, Johnston, RI 8-11pm
 6,13,27 - Flying Monkey, Newington, CT 5:30-8pm
 7,14,21,28 - Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 7-10pm
 11 - Main St. Grille, Broad Brook, CT 6-9pm
 12 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 8pm
 18 - Turnpike Cafe, Montville, CT 6-9pm
 19 - Blackledge, Marlborough, CT 6-9pm
 20 - Cady's, Chepachet, RI 4-9pm
 26 - Cafe Nine, New Haven, CT 8pm
 30 - Sneekers, Groton, CT 7-10pm
 31 - Maury's, Danielson, CT 7-10pm

THE CARTELLS

13,26 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 3-6pm
 18 - Parrott Delaney, New Hartford, CT 7-10pm
 26 - Bill's Seafood, Old Saybrook, CT 7:30-10:30pm

DARIK & THE FUNBAGS

12 - Blackstone, Southington, CT 9:30p
 17 - Brennans Place, Holyoke, MA 7p
 19 - Chicago Sams, Cromwell, CT 8:30p
 26 - Woodbury Brewing, Woodbury, CT 8:30p

DON'T TELL LISA

4 - Tipping Chair, Milldale, CT 8pm
 11 - Richonis, Groton, CT 8pm
 17 - Phoenix, Pawcatuck, CT 7:30pm
 19 - The Barn, Groton, CT 8pm
 26 - Bleachers, Bristol, CT 8pm

EIGHT TO THE BAR

4 - Moseley's, Dedham, MA 8:30-11:30

THE FAKE EXPERIENCE

27 - Angie's, Mystic, CT 3-7pm

GLAUCOMA SUSPECT

18 - Strange Brew, Norwich, CT 8pm

LARA HERSCOVITCH

8 - Quonibaug College, Danielson CT
 19 - Olney Theatre, Olney, MD
 24 - County Arts Guild, Baltimore, MD

8 SOUND WAVES

NICK BOSSE

5 - Friar Tuck's, Mystic, CT 9-12am
 6 - Stone Cow Brewery, Barre, MA 2-5pm
 10 - Filomena's, Waterford, CT 6-8pm
 11,25 - Phoenix, Pawcatuck, CT 7:30-10:30pm
 18 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7-10pm
 19 - Boomerangs, W. Warwick, RI 8-11pm
 26 - Tamarack, Voluntown, CT 6-9pm
 27 - Shunock Brewery, N.Stonington, CT 4-7pm
 31 - Samuel Slater's, Webster, MA 5:30 - 8:30pm

THE NIGHT SHAKERS

5 - The Barn, Groton, CT 7-10 pm
 6 - Narragansett Cafe, Jamestown, RI 1-4 pm
 18 - Buttonwood Tree, Middletown, CT 8-10 pm

RAMBLIN' DAN STEVENS

4 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT 9:30
 5 - Blackledge CC, Hebron, CT 6:30
 6 - The Barn, Groton, CT 3pm
 11,12 - Beach Hotel, Madison, CT 7pm
 13 - Taphouse 150, Cromwell, CT 11:30am
 24 - Joe's, Cromwell, CT 7pm
 25 - Witchdoctor, Southington, CT 8pm
 26 - Hops, S. Glastonbury, CT 2pm
 27 - Notch8, Bethel, CT noon

SHAME DAN SCANDAL

12 - Hot Rods, New London, CT 8pm

SUNDAY GRAVY

4 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7pm

TSC ACOUSTIC

17 - Hops, Glastonbury CT 5:30-8:30pm
 18 - Jerry's, Middletown CT 8-11:30pm

WOOLITE

5 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT

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3 KGB Kurt/Guy Band 6-9	4 20th Century Kids 7-10	5 The Night Shakers 7-10	6 Ramblin' Dan Stevens 3-6
10 Sub Liminals 6-9	11 Wooly Mammoth 7-10	12 Mystic Dead \$10 7-10	13 Ken & Nina 3-6
17 Traditional Irish Music all day 3-10	18 The Carleans \$10 7-10	19 Don't Tell Lisa \$10 7-10	20 James Harris 3-6
24 Lucas Neil 6-9	25 Dan Watson 7-10	26 706 Union Ave 7-10	27 KGB Kurt/Guy Band 3-6
31 Dee Jayne 6-9	2 Fleet 7-10	Try Out Our Own Craft Beers from Our Brewery Barn Brew Co.	SUNDAYS Traditional Irish Music 12-3

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FRANKLIN BROTHERS BAND

Brothers in Harmony

By Sue Menhart

Ahhh, sibling harmonies. Nothing sweeter, nothing cooler, nothing more cosmic. There's a oneness to it that cannot be denied. Some of the world's most beloved bands have been comprised of siblings and their lasting influence speaks for itself: The Beach Boys, Van Halen, AC/DC, The Allman Brothers, The Avett Brothers, Radiohead, The Isley Brothers, Oasis, The Everly Brothers, The Kinks and The Bee Gees to name a few. Well let me introduce to you Mystic, Connecticut natives Jay and Carl Franklin, who have been rocking the local music scene for decades as The Franklin Brothers Band. Sixteen months apart, these brothers in real life and in musical kinship can play the heck out of anything, blow the doors off venues, and bring the best supporting musicians along for the ride. Professionally trained since the age of five, their music today exudes precision and at the same time joy, with groove and funk and all the good stuff people love to go out and hear. I sat down with Jay and Carl Franklin at the Garde Arts Center Oasis Room in New London, Connecticut to talk about their early influences (their Mom!), the evolution of their band, their day jobs, including Carl's PWOP studios located now at The Garde, and their original music. It was fun to hear them finish each other's sentences and consistently praise one another with respect and adoration.

Origin Stories

When did you two first start playing music together?

(Jay) – We used to make fake guitars out of plywood. Our friends would come over and we would play Rock Star.

(Carl) – We would play songs like “Don't Look Back” by Boston on 45” and jump around in the living room, in elementary school. Our Mom was a classical music aficionado, and still is. She reared us in the musical culture. We were taking piano lessons when we were five and six years old. But she did buy us Beatles records! She bought us electric guitars when we wanted them even though she can't stand it. She drove us to lessons and had us sing in the Westerly Chorus when we were eight. She would drive us twice a week for that

and we would carpool with other parents. We were in the church choir at a church in Mystic, which was nothing compared to the Westerly Chorus. We were singing Beethoven's Ninth when we were ten years old.

(Jay) – We started out as trebles (falsettos).

(Carl) – Jay was a better reader of piano music than I was even though we were both taking piano lessons.

(Jay) – We started taking piano lessons with Mrs. Knapp, in second or third grade.

(Carl) – We had a piano in the house too.

(Jay) – Our Dad back then was just an innocent bystander. Every once in a while, he would whip out his harmonica or his Dixieland New Orleans jazz records.

(Carl) – He just followed our mother's lead. She was obviously the musical dominatrix of the family. I remember my Dad just sitting in a chair and reading and wanting to be left alone. He would read books while we were watching the “Dukes of Hazard” and other loud television shows. Unbelievable concentration.

(Jay) – Then we took lessons from Mrs. Mary Hubbard. That was fifth or sixth grade.

(Carl) – The point at which I diverged to guitar was mostly because Jay was so much better at piano than me. I didn't want to practice. I didn't want to read. I just wanted to get enough from the notes that I could play something, and then just make sh*t up. My piano teacher noticed this. So I just said I'd rather play guitar. I was ten when I switched to guitar. I started playing guitar in 1977, incidentally, the year that Aja [from Steely Dan] came out. That album blew my mind and changed my life.

(Jay) – The guitar teacher [Jesse Casimono] used to come to the house and teach Carl in the living room and I would sit in the corner and watch and listen.

(Carl) – And so after he left, Jay would sit down with a guitar and play exactly what [I had learned.] Once we got to high school, I had been playing trumpet since sixth grade, and Jay had been playing oboe. But then in high school Jay said, “I think I want to play trumpet.” He made second trumpet and was playing in the band!

(Jay) – Well that's because there was no oboe part for a parade band.

(Carl) – The point of the story is, he just picked up trumpet like it was water. It's in our genes.

Did you always sing harmonies together?

(Carl) – Oh yes. We noticed that if we sang together we got more attention from girls.

(Jay) – After the air guitar thing we used to get together with Jeff Fernald in our living room or his basement and we would learn Beatles songs and play them. He would bring his drums in, Carl would play guitar or bass, I would play piano.

(Carl) – The first band experience I had was playing bass on a guitar for “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” in our living room. We would sing, pre-pubescent. Jay’s voice hadn’t changed yet.

(Jay) – In high school we had our first studio experience with Ron Drago and Wayne Manca.

(Carl) – Our parents gave us x-amount and said this is all you get. We recorded two original songs, “In Love with You” and “Break of Dawn.” We played it for all our friends. But the first gig we ever played out in a bar was at “Poor Richards.” I was 15 and Jay was 16. I remember having to get working papers because I wasn’t 16. I’m pretty sure they paid us under the table anyway. I remember Richard the owner wanted to know what we called ourselves. I said, “I don’t know. Jay and Carl Franklin?” And he said, “How about the Franklin Brothers?” I said OK.

Who went to college? Did the music go on?

(Carl) – I went to Berklee.

(Jay) – I went to Central Connecticut in New Britain for two years. I played in a jazz band there but I played bass.

(Carl) – You also won the Battle of the Bands at college as the lead singer. He was all buff. I was in another band called “Max.” We were the house band at the “Cricket Lounge” in Westerly while I was still in high school. So me and Jay were not in the same band at that point.

(Jay) Then I transferred out of Central and went to Ann Arbor, Michigan for engineering (naval architecture) at University of Michigan. I knew I could have a much better life with an engineering salary than a wandering musician, wondering where his next dollar was coming from.

(Carl) – I went to Berklee for performance, but I decided to switch to recording engineering. It seemed that everybody there wanted to do that, and I knew it would take 2-3 years before I could step into a recording studio, so I decided to go to Full Sail in Florida. While I was living on my own, I decided to take a job as a data entry operator. I had been teaching myself programming and it dawned on me that this is what I should be doing. My father made it clear that if you’re a musician you’re going to be singing a lot, and saying, “Do you want fries with that?” So, computers were calling to me so that’s why I ended up in software development.

(Jay) – I worked for a defense company for six years then got into software development like Carl.

(Carl) – By the time Jay got into software,

I had already started writing for software magazines and speaking at conferences. So Jay took a class in programming.

(Jay) – The person who ran the class already knew about Carl. It came out that I was Carl Franklin’s brother and apparently, he almost choked on his pizza when he found out I was his brother.

(Carl) – Jay gets out of this class for Visual Basic and immediately gets hired by a company in Groton and they teach him JavaScript, HTML and MUMPS. He went through six or seven languages very quickly. I make my money as an independent software developer, and music is where I spend it. I also have a sponsored weekly YouTube show.

History of the Band

How did the current Franklin Brothers Band get started?

(Carl) – One Name: John Boyle. One of our childhood friends, a local golf legend. He had esophageal cancer. When he was terminal he came to me and said, “Carl, I want to get married to my girlfriend before I die and here’s the date. I want you to get the best band with the best players, I don’t care how much it costs. I want the best sound. I want the best lights. I want it to be the best gig you’ve ever played.” So I said to Jay, “We need nine pieces. We need four horns, we need a percussionist, drums, bass, me on guitar, you on piano.” The kind of people I needed were the kind who could read charts, and people that were available, and money talks with those guys. So I calculated what it would be to pay everybody \$500 for this gig, plus rehearsals. So I said to John, this is how much we want. So he came over to the studio and laid down a stack of hundreds and said, “Here ya go.” So Jay and I bought charts for every song we wanted to play. We got these great musicians, we told them we needed to have this many rehearsals, and we don’t have very long to get this band together.

And then he died. He thought he could make his wedding, but he didn’t. He passed away on June 20, 2015.

His girlfriend decided to keep the same date but instead of having a wedding it was to be a Celebration of Life at the



PHOTO: Circa 1983 - On the steps of the former bank in downtown Mystic on Main St (now a brew pub) for May Day. Chris Selden on drums, Steve Walker on bass, Carl on guitar and Jay on keys.

Holy Ghost Society Portuguese Club in Stonington, Connecticut. Tod Evers orchestrated it. The band played, we had sound speakers up the wall, a light show. We had one guy who played for Bruce Springsteen. But the seed money [from John] jump started this band. Without John, we probably wouldn't be playing. We knew what it would take to get people together to rehearse this kind of music. In the real world, you would play for a year before you could go out and get a gig. This is hard stuff. So that's when we started playing with the big band professionally. Then, we noticed that we really liked Steely Dan. Every time we got together we were like, "Let's add these too!" Everybody wanted to play more Steely Dan. So at one point I noticed that Jason Wallace from Strange Brew in Norwich, Connecticut was doing tribute nights and packing the place. I talked to him and I said, "What do you think about a Steely Dan Tribute Night?" He said, "Are you kidding? That would be great! My clients would love this." So I went back to the guys and I said, "How many Steely Dan songs do we have now? Seven? Let's add six more." So we had a whole set pretty much and we billed ourselves as a Steely Dan Tribute Band. We didn't even advertise. People came from everywhere and jam-packed that place because [Jason] just got the word out through his social media.

What are the venues you play now? Are all the gigs Steely Dan Tribute nights?

(Carl) - The Social, Strange Brew, Knickerbocker, Phoenix, Black Eyed Sally's. No we try not to make them all like that.

What is the current band lineup?

Che Cartafalsa: Percussion, Tom DeFaria: Drums, Nichelle Rollins: Vocals, Rob Funk: Trombone, Gary Boigon: Sax, Cedric Mayfield: Sax, Dave Cafro: Trumpet, we are currently between bass players.

What was your favorite gig ever?

(Carl) - There were some gigs at Daddy Jacks [in New London] that just felt so great. I think it was because of the smallness of it. It's really sad about Daddy Jack.

(Jay) - I was a little starstruck when we played at the Knickerbocker [in Westerly] for the first time. That had a lasting impression.

Original Music

Tell me about your albums - "Lifeboat to Nowhere" and "Been Awhile."

(Carl) - Building of the PWOP studio facilitated that. I wouldn't have built the studio if I didn't have a bunch of money coming in from podcast ad revenue. The studio was built out in 2007. I built the studio I always wanted. First we did "Lifeboat to Nowhere." We had our friends play on it. We hired people from the Coast Guard, some people the [Eastern Connecticut] symphony [orchestra] knew about, we had a string ensemble from the symphony, Gabriel Kastle organized that. Then "Been Awhile" was on the heels of that. My ex-wife was planning on taking the kids and her mother on a girl's trip to Hawaii. I had taken them places and I had traveled a lot and she wanted to do a trip with them. So I found

myself with a week with no ballet pickup and drop-off, no chores, no kids. I cleared my schedule. All the podcasts we had to do that week we did ahead of time, so I basically took a week off. So I found the three best players I could think of: Andy Chaney on bass, Matt Covey on drums and Al LaPorte on piano. I said, "Hey - here's the gig..." The money was good for them. We started at 6 p.m. every night and went til about 10, then broke off for dinner and then came back and played til about 2 or 3 a.m. We did that for five nights in a row. Some of the songs we just filled in the blanks. I had frameworks of things, and there was one that I hadn't even written. Some were just outlandish and hard to play, and Al even got mad at me because the first night I really put him through hell. The second night we did "Drive My Car" and they were like, "OK. Now this is more like it." I paid Harry Fox Agency my dues for that. Big Butter and Egg Man is another cover on that album.

How did you get the prominent jazz-rock guitarist John Scofield to play on "Been a While"?

(Carl) - I met him through a mutual friend who I used to work for and fell absolutely head over heels in love with his music before I even knew there was a connection. Jay and I were listening to his album "A Go Go" and we were like, this is so cool. You can do that? It sounds so old-school, and retro, and jammy but really jazzy and bluesy and tasteful and totally in the pocket. We were really inspired by this album. So when I played the album for my ex-boss (and friend) Ethan Winer he said, "Who's that?" And I said, "John Scofield." He said, "That guy! He used to be my rhythm guitar player!" So it turns out they were childhood friends. They both play guitar. Shortly after that Jay and I went to Toad's to see John Scofield in his Up All Night Tour with the Uberjam Band and I went backstage. He was fielding questions so I said, "Hey John - Ethan Winer says hi." And he says, "Ethan Winer! He used to be better than me! How is he?" It was right before "Lifeboat to Nowhere" came out and I asked Ethan to introduce me to John to see if he could write the liner notes for the album. I knew it was a long shot but I just wanted him to hear it. It was fortuitous because he told me later that he gets handed a stack of CDs every day but he just doesn't have the time [to listen to them all]. But because we came in through a friend he actually listened to it and he really liked it, and he was sincere about it. He said, "I'm serious - this is good stuff Carl. I don't say this about everything." But he also said that no, he could not write the liner notes because he would make one friend and a million enemies. "If I do that for you," he said, "everybody else is going to call me and say hey - why didn't you write the liner notes for my album?" I didn't think of it that way but he's right. When you're John Scofield you kind of have to be careful what you do and what you say. So when I was doing "Been A While" I would be making mixes that I would be really proud of and I would send them to him. And he would email me back saying "This is really good." So we had this relationship by email. Then I wanted to see if I could hire him to do one of the solos on one of the songs that we had done. I think I wrote it with him in mind actually. I heard the solo in my head but I couldn't play it. I couldn't solo on it without sounding like Chuck Berry trying

to play fusion. It just didn't sound right. So I went to his gig in Montreal and it was Valentine's Day. I went backstage and I said, "I'd like to hire you to play on my album." And he said, "Well, I'm not cheap and I really don't do that anymore." So he said, "Let's have breakfast tomorrow," and I gave him the CD. So we met and he said, "I like it but I'd really like to play on something that you sing on because I like your voice." So I said, "Well, I'll write a new tune." Then he told me how much it was and it wasn't as much as I thought it would be. He had the stipulation that he appeared courtesy of EmArcy Records and that he couldn't be featured on the album, he just had to be one of the artists, one of the band members. So that was all good. So he came to New London and we recorded a tune. We had a good ole time geeking out about Miles and stuff and he just really enjoyed himself. Then he came back and he did it again a year later and we recorded another original song with different people in the band. That song is called "Groove or Get Out of the Way." It isn't on any album it's just a YouTube video. So yeah, we've been friends ever since.

Do you think you'll ever write original music again?

(Carl) - I've been dying to. I'm way beyond wanting to make money from it though. It's going to COST money to do an album. I gotta pay the players. I have to do the manufacturing. Then again, we might just write some stuff, videotape ourselves recording it, and put the videos on YouTube, and not even do an album, just because we want to make more music. Nobody wants CDs anymore. You hand them a CD and they're like, "What am I supposed to do with that? I don't have a CD player..."

(Jay) - Recently things have been popping through my head.

What was COVID like for you musically?

(Carl) - COVID kind of stressed me out. I was left brain focused. Make the money, write the content, do the YouTube shows, do the research, do some training, get as smart as I could with new technology. For fun, I wrote code, games whatever. It's been a while since I sat down and zoned out to some good music.

(Jay) - I was one of the lucky ones that I could just take my laptop home and work from it. I started working in my living room. What really sucked is that the band just disappeared. We didn't practice, we had no gigs. So I was playing a lot less. I don't play a lot by myself in the house unless nobody's there. But I do get to listen to music while I'm working. I got that.

To watch live videos of The Franklin Brothers band, to listen to their music and for contact information, click this link:

<http://franklinbrothersband.com>

Here's the band's upcoming schedule:

The Social, New London, April 2, 7:30 p.m.

The Phoenix, Pawcatuck, May 28, 7 p.m.

Steely Dan Tribute Show! Ocean Beach Boardwalk, June 24, 8 p.m.

The Phoenix, Pawcatuck, July 2, 7 p.m.

The Social, New London, July 30, 7:30 p.m.

The Phoenix, Pawcatuck, August 20, 7 p.m.

Ct Maritime Heritage Festival, New London, Sept. 11, 1 p.m.

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LOCAL BEAT

“Sharing a Bit of Renzoni’s History of Connecticut Rock N’ Roll”

By Andrew Kerbs

Let us now celebrate decades of hip CT music. Seeing how nationalized (or even globalized) billboard music charts have become over the last 50 years it’s hard to remember a time when commercial DJs (college radio notwithstanding) played to local bands and musical tastes. Thankfully, Tony Renzoni has shared a bit of that history in his book “CT Rock and Roll” which highlights important artists to come out of or live in CT as well as documenting the history of the important relationship among diners, radio DJs and record stores in the ever-evolving CT music scene.

The author does a good job bringing the roots of rock n roll home to readers by describing the bustling Waterbury CT scene where he grew up: from Handy’s Kitchen to Clarks Dairy to music venues like Brass City and Matatuck’s Record Stores. In current times, of course, there’s Tumbleweeds, Mystic Disc and Telegraph local to South-Eastern CT. As I’ve mentioned before, tangible records and record-store owners (and workers) are the social capital which glue communities together. After all, what is a town without its arts and music scene?

In addition to music stores, Renzoni has a lot to say about radio. There’s been a lot of hot radio DJs to speak of at WCNI in New London, but the 1st true rock n roll DJ has got to be Stanford’s Alan Freed. Freed capitalized on the rising popularity of early 50s jazz and R&B (the likes of Louis Jordan, Bill Haley and other post-big-band performers) when he hosted the first popular rock station in Cleveland WJW (formerly a classical station). His Big Beat TV show also broke down racial barriers and helped pave the way for Chuck



Berry and Little Richard.

Furthermore, radio stations, diner owners and DJs were (and continue to be) the 3 touchstones of community-based music business. WNAB sponsored record “sock hops” or dances that featured the “Twist” dance craze. Teens spun records on town diner jukeboxes which radio DJs would collect from restaurant owners to decide which music to feature on their on-air playlists. Without airplay, musicians didn’t sell records and both performers and record store owners sold lots of records with no small help by pocket transistor radios (a precursor to walkmen and I-pods). Interestingly, this pre-internet locus of socio-musical capital was not yet nationalized. Thus, charts could differ between stations, which reported or sent charts to local music stores to know what records to sell.

Fans of 40s big-band music should enjoy digging in this gem of a book for pre-rock-n-roll hits like “McNamara’s Band” by Bing Crosby, Dwight and the Jesters. Gene Pitney’s smooth tenor escalates into a crescendo worthy of Broadway on “I’m Gonna Be Strong” and both Bing and Frankie Sinatra (most notable “I Love You Baby”) would influence the melding of jazz-pop and rock n roll by later bands Blood Sweat and Tears and Chicago.

However, this book is mostly devoted to the golden age of rock & roll music starting in the mid-50s. Harvey Rob-

bins of Sharon Mass helped organize the Doo Wop hall of fame to celebrate pop music of the 1950s and 60s. The Hall featured prominent pre-Motown R&B like The Nutmegs or ‘The Barons’ – “Pledge of a Fool (Booomomom).” Playmate’s “Beep Beep” hit in CT and NY state was a precursor to the Beatles “Drive My Car” and duo Cookie and Charlie were featured on local program CT Bandstand. The D-Men, of which Tony Renzoni was a part, played with the Stones in 1964 and what Boomer could forget the jangly brass-rock sounds of Andy Dio or Jamie and Jane’s romantic jangle-pop harmonies?

Tony also does a fine job tuning readers into music’s sense of place by describing not just record stores and DJs but local theaters and music venues that catered to town’s thirst for community and show business. The Shags played “Don’t Press Your Luck” at the Wallingford’s Oakdale Theater, opening for the Rascals, BB King & Simon and Garfunkle. The Five Satins recorded their famous hit “Still of Night” in the basement of St. Bernadette’s Church, featuring vocals by prominent black vocalist Fred Parris (who replaced Bill Baker after returning from his stint in the army). Seymour’s Acting Colony in the Naugatuck Valley was known as much for the “Twist” and its “sock hop” dance events as it was for its tomato sauce. Well known girl group Debbie and the Darnell’s played a “Twistarama” show for teens at the Colony, particularly for girls who had outgrown traditional rock n roll (like Bill Haley) or guys who still liked R&B more than they enjoyed folk (which was gaining popularity early in the 60s). Although considered inferior by macho rock n roll purists, girl groups’ “wall of sound” had an important influence on The Beach Boys, Springsteen and blue eyed soul bands of the 70s. Other prominent CT pop stars of the 50s-60s included Tommy Dae of Rockville/Vernon CT who recorded “Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny.” His hit was “answered” by Jeri Lynne Fraser who recorded “Poor Pegonia” about a freezing girl being rescued by her man after falling into cold water in her swimsuit. The Actor’s Colony Inn also made a career for Tony Bennet who has the club to thank (which was sadly set ablaze) for his ongoing success. Fi-

nally, Branford, CT hosted the Indian Neck Folk Festival featuring appearances by then little-known Dylan and by teen trio Steam who recorded “Kiss Him Goodbye” (Na Na Hey Hey) which would later become a major stadium anthem.

Although rock radio had become a national phenomenon by the 1970s and 80s, artists continued to make their songs and tours heard at the local level. Ronnie Spector (of 1960s R&B fame) hailed from Danbury and continued to remain popular well into 1970s. Meat Loaf lived and toured CT, achieving early CT hits with such songs as “Two Out of 3 Aint Bad.” Funky psychedelia was still alive well into the 70s and US69’s Yesterday’s Folks album did just as good a job introducing 70s kids to Eastern influences as the Beatles and Zeppelin. The heart of rock n roll wasn’t only alive and well but spawned the early rumblings of metal. Dennis Dunway (of Alice Cooper’s band) was arguable an early headbanger on the CT scene. Michael Bolton also sang his first hit “Love Me Tonight” in metal band Blackjack, getting his start even earlier than that playing the song “Bah Bah Bah” with his band Joy. Blackjack opened for Peter Frampton after playing at Toad’s Place (then called Hungry Charlie’s). Other hard rock song with similar local success included “Tragedy” by band Stonehenge and

As the commercial and corporate rock excess of the 70s reared its ugly head, local radio stations, musicians and eventually record store owners began to feel the squeeze against national stadium rock bands saturating the market. Toto grew up in Hartford as their parents played in symphonies here and Paul Simon and the Rolling Stones have also claimed residency in the state. The Stones even played a surprise concert at Toad’s Place in 1989 just prior to touring for their Steel Wheels tour. University Hartford was also the birthplace of Max Creek in the early 70s (a popular jam band staple even as late as the 90s). However the freshest rock n roll talent had neither money nor connections like that. Local musicians like Talking Heads, Reducers and eventually Sonic Youth fought back to keep rock simple, quirky and grassroots-oriented at the street level. Enter the New England punk rock movement! Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz of Talking Heads fame hit it in the “new-wave” club scene with their splinter band Tom Tom Club, scoring dance hits “Wordy Wrappinghood” and “Genius of Love” in the early 80s. Frantz was recently a DJ at WPKN Bridgeport. Ken Evans (of band 5th Estate) helped manage that band and Roger Reale helped record their EP “Wake the Neighbors.” The Reducers of New London fame released small hits in the 80s like “Out of Step/No Ambition,” “Let’s Go” and “Punky Little Hood.” The Reducers called it a day upon the death of bassist Steve Kaika, after which time they had gone out with a bang with excellent album Guitar Drum and Bass which included songs “Yeah Yeah/Don’t You Wanna.” CT is also home to Thurstone Moore of Sonic Youth who was a cub scout and volunteer park cleaner clean who researched drug problems around his hometown of Bethel as part of a school project. St. Mary’s school described him as a “rock n roll animal” and he attended Western CT State University in the late 70s where he played prog rock until graduating and forming Sonic Youth in early 80s with Kim Gordon (whom he later married). That band would move away from 70s rock and

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towards punk rock (as many bands were doing at that time.) Sonic would score with semi-popular albums in the 80s and 90s like Candle and Dirty which featured videos like “Teenage Riot” and “Kool Thing.”

More recently, Liz Phair was born in New Haven and adopted by Dr. and Ms. Phair (the latter a graduate of Wellesley College). She never knew her biological parents and she was always on the move because her father was relocated repeatedly between hospitals. Hence, the lack of roots associated with her adoption bequeathed to her a “floatable” unattached world that gave her “free space” to write songs. Her accomplishments included hit 90s rock album Exile In Guyville and the soundtrack to Chasing Amy shot in Red Bank, NJ.

Finally the rock world would not be the same without rock photographer Joe Sia who abandoned his car and hitched a motorbike ride through the “sea of humanity” to photo headlines at Woodstock in 1969. He also photographed “jaw dropping closeups” of Lennon, Clapton, Hendrix and Rod Stewart, some of which were featured on their album covers.

For those of you interested in local CT rock history, buy a copy of Tony’s book at Bank Square Books or Telegraph in Mystic or New London, respectively.



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BAR FLY JOURNALS

By Stephanie Shawn

Hello My sweet Bar Flies..well it's here! The magic month. The historic time when myself, sister BETSY and ARTIE were born in three successive years but the same day.

Over the years we have celebrated with some absolutely amazing events. This year we are taking a step back! Next year we are coming back strong!! I'll keep you posted!



Fabulous time hanging with the Crew at WESTERLY YACHT CLUB for the DAYTONA 500. AMBER kicked ass in the clam/oyster shucking contests! Nice to see things getting back to normal! SCOTT, MICHELLE, STEVE, SULLY, CAROLINE, TONY, TRISH, JON and the rest of the peeps made me feel like I belonged and a big Thank You to treasurer RICK BROWN for the invite. BTW your hair looked Mahvelous!



MIRANDA LAMBERT hit our town recently hanging with the regulars at SHUNOCK BREWERY in North Stonington!

Had an amazing time Bowling at ALLEY KATZ in Westerly with the beautiful girls from COCO'S SALON for our XMAS Party. Couldn't break 100 even
16 SOUND WAVES



with the gutter guards up.



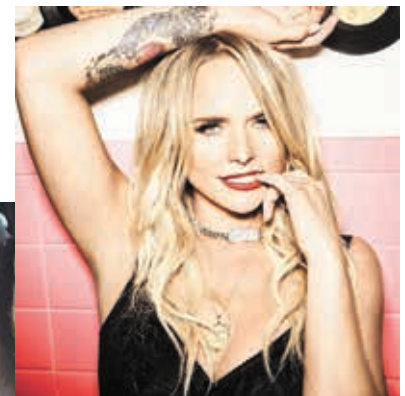
Romper Stomper Birthday Babes.. Happy Birthday to Me, ELIZABETH MITCHEL CIPRIANO, ARTHUR WEYANT, BETSY TETLOW, BONNIE LONGO, LORI POST, BEN GEER SR., SUE BLISS DONOVAN, BARBARA STILLMAN, JERRY LONGOLUCCO, RAY PELCHAT, DARLA VEILLEUX, DENISE BEDDELL DESROSIER, BILL BAZYDLO, VICKI WALBRIDGE, PETE WAKEMAN, STACIE MARIE,

HANNAH SELVIDIO, ANDREA ZARATE-SIMPSON, JILL JEFF NOLAN, JAKI FARR, FERNANDO CRUZ, ODESSA MESSINA and STEVE SMOKEY ROBINSON.

Alot going on this month! Heading to BIKE WEEK in Daytona! And maybe even a secret rendezvous with a RockStar at the BARN in Groton! We'll see!

And dont forget HANDLEBAR CAFE/COCO'S SALON SPRING FLING! Many vendors, crafts, clothing! March 23rd from 4-7! Free Wine!! Can't beat that with a stick!

*Ciao for now! My sweet Flies!
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Sakis Zachariades

"Navigator"

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Sakis Zachariades is one of the most notable synth guitarist on the Fusion scene in Greece today. He is a masterful Jazz improviser whose music generally falls somewhere between rock fusion and modern jazz. When I saw this being my March assignment for Sound Waves it brought a smile to my face for two reasons; One – Anything having to do with Greece brings back fond memories of vacations there, and Two – I was glad to see Zachariades cut a CD of his own. You see, this isn't my first exposure to this great guitarist. I was first introduced to Zachariades when I reviewed Ken Serio's latest CD "The Fuse Box". It's genius of Serio to find and include Zachariades in his overseas band when Serio is doing his international tour. So now I see since Serio is state-side it was time for Zachariades to start his own band with an excellent roster of talented musicians. Members include: Guitar, Sakis Zachariades – Keys, LeThanh Tam – Bass, Tass Petridis – Drums, Gerry Pantazis. His latest 11 track project "Navigator" is all instrumental, all sophisticated "fusion", and a real treat import from Greece.

The CD opens with "Entropia" and within the first couple of notes you can immediately hear every aspect of "quality" with this body of work. The sound engineering was done by their keyboard player LeThanh Tam with beautiful hi-def tones, every note crystal and no one instrument overbearing or muddy. Yes, I look at everything, and to continue my "quality" reference of this band, every musician is seasoned, experienced, and holding up their end and making the music all come together beautifully. If you close your eyes, it almost sounds like

18 SOUND WAVES

George Benson playing as guest guitarist with Spyro Gyra. Unfortunately my assessment of the second track "Wave Matters" is that it sounds like a slower version of the first track. Still great quality shining through and excellent as a stand alone but if you heard the first and second track back to back you would think the same. Song placement is key to a successful production. However, I loved the third track "Captain Toan". A totally different beat and uplifting tone. Drummer does a great job of seeing this track through, and the keys are also amazing but maybe a little too much synth on guitar. When the band steps away from the heavy synth tones and lets the organic key tones shine through, the listener really takes note of how much the drums & keys bring overall. In "Jamin Gerry", Gerry Pantazis flies across the skins and in parts take center stage with LeThanh Tam on keys but once again way too much synth. In "Killa Gorilla" the song intro sounds like an off-key kazoo. Definitely not the best choice to start this track but as the song progresses the music cleans up nicely. With the strange kazoo intro aside this one is one of my favorites as the great drumming talents of Gerry Pantazis again shines through.

Also really enjoyed "I Like It Muffled" with Dimitris Aggelakis on vibes who is definitely on par with modern Xylophone greats Bob Becker, and Evelyn Glennie.

On the next track "You Inspire Me" the spot light is on bass player Tass Petridis who does an excellent job along with keys, and drums. They carry the song while synth guitarist Zachariades provides a misty lead overlay setting a sophisticated mood. And while listening to "Inner World" I am happy to report something totally different. You will understand why I'm saying this in my closing remarks. For now I will say it was refreshing to hear Zachariades taking it easy on the synths. To my ear it sounded like he was playing an electric nylon string guitar. As a matter of fact I have one and playing it through the right mix of pedals can create an amazing array of tones. The last track is "Social Aesthetics" which is also finally different. The addition of Costas Katsaros on trumpet was an excellent choice for giving this track an inspiring feel but I would have liked him added on several other tracks as well. His trumpet playing gives another layer of sophistication and was introduced way too late in the game. Better late than never...

OK, here are my closing remarks and why I made a point of mentioning how certain tracks were "finally different"... Firstly and most important of all there is no disputing the quality of this great fusion band Zachariades put together. Any track if heard alone would perk-up the listeners ears hands down. My doubts arise when listening to his work in it's entirety. Many of the songs sound similar and in all honesty when I first heard "Navigator", I really didn't like it. As a matter of fact there are songs I didn't even mention in this revue because of being too similar to each other. But after listening to the CD several times it was like a fine wine and all it's different nuances, it definitely grew on me. Moving forward Zachariades not only needs to take a closer look at his song structure but equally important is the song placement. Most of my regular readers already know I look at everything, I'm a frustrated music producer, what can I say. All in all "Navigator" is definitely worth a listen and I recommernd it. If you like Spyro Gyra and John McLaughlin this is somewhere in the middle and you will truly appreciate and enjoy Sakis Zachariades "Navigator", available on Amazon.com.

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb



The Wildroots

"The Wildroots Sessions Vol. 2"

Wild Roots Records, LLC

"Optimization" is a word that somehow comes to mind when listening to, and digging deeper into, The Wild Roots: at first glance, the artist on this new release is listed as, simply, The Wild Roots. Look closer, and it is essentially a musical trio, Victor Wainwright, Stephen Dees, and Patricia Ann Dees. Between them they have written, in various combinations, fifteen new songs, with Bryan Bassett co-writing three of these. But then, five more musicians, with prior contributions to the group, join in, filling out the sound and scope of the band. This is not at all uncommon, whether

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on recordings or live performances by various bands; yet here is where the notion of optimization comes in, as The Wild Roots are joined at various points by no less than twenty-one additional musicians.

Who, it must be said, seem to have checked their egos at the door. The opening track, I.O.U., features Victor Wainwright and Patricia Ann Dees on "Co-Lead Vocals," in a bluesy, rocking number; while Dees co-leads with Reba Russell on Long Way To Go, a bayou-spiritual piece featuring Stephen Kampa's harmonica as counter to the vocals, over acoustic slide guitar. The theme of trading off and mixing vocal leads continues throughout, with Wainwright, both of the Dee's, and eight others among the extended cast of vocalists. Mark Hodgson brings the blues to The Threads Of Time, with Bryan Bassett playing a passionate guitar, while Robert "Top" Thomas sings over a simple arrangement on Pile Of Blues. The final song features twenty-one year old gospel singer Brianna Harris singing lead, with the Dee's, Beth McKee, Nick Black, and Wainwright providing a backing chorus.

And, there are the instrumentalists, a mix of guitarists, keyboards, percussion, harmonica, providing the supporting and embellishing touches of an accomplished ensemble, writ large. This is an album which needs to be experienced to be fully appreciated, an experience which may begin by visiting www.WildRootsRecords.com.

- Jon Persson



Eric Krasno
"Always"

Guitarist, Producer and Singer, Eric Krasno is an artist of many talents. His production and writing credits include an eclectic group of A-Listers including, 50 Cent, Norah Jones, Justin Timberlake and Aaron Neville, just to name a few. His latest endeavor, 'Always', is a collaborated effort with producer and long time associate, Otis Mc-

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Donald. 'Always' was inspired by Krasno's new found security and enjoyment that he's come to realize in fatherhood and family. With the pandemic forcing the world to take a beat, Krasno found inspiration in a new home, wife and child. The LP's opener 'Silence' is a mid-tempo throwback to the Hip-Hop era which speaks of the pain of miscommunication between lovers. 'So Cold' opens with a Temptations 'Ball of Confusion' vibe that pulls you in for the entire ride.

'Lost Myself' has that classic James Brown static-step groove, inclusive of killer horns and a cool 70's vibe. 'Man in Me' is a soulful spin on the Dylan classic. 'Alone Together' conjures up a Lenny Kravitz feel that soothes the senses as only Kravitz can. 'Where I Belong' comes on soft but strong with a bluesy B.B. King's 'The Thrill Is Gone' feel. You might want to turn down the base before turning up 'Good Thing'. 'Hold Tight' is instrumentally straightforward, combined with a hint of gospel and a Stones 'Laugh, I Nearly Died' groove. 'Always With You' is the LP's last call and intentionally feels distant, slow and deliberate and brings a spiritual end to the LP. Krasno is an artist who is constantly challenging himself with new escapades and experiences that leave you longing for whatever comes next. For all information on Eric Krasno visit www.erickrasno.com

- Joby Rogers



Speedfossil
"No Anesthesia"

Red On Red Records

Garret Vandermolen has seen the inside of almost every aspect of the music world, from the artistic to the operational, the business and promoter to member of the band: and, to the point of burnout with it all, resulting at one point in an extended hiatus from the music scene. Such are the elements of experience and maturity, which in 2014 saw Vandermolen's return to the art he was never able to leave fully behind.

A new album, his third since returning to the biz, features ten original songs intended to be listened to as a single musical presentation. Though recorded with digital equipment, the artist has foregone all the editing and manipulations available through the new technology, opting instead to record in single takes, placing the onus on his and his bandmate's musicality and practiced skill.

The result is a sound that would have fit in well with the intense creative burst that marked the 60's music scene; lyrics that tell a story in well-crafted verses, sung to attractive melodies with variations of harmony. The backing instruments provide mood-setting rock n'roll rhythms and fills, driving the songs with energy and reserve as called for by their stories. Speedfossil's sound evokes younger days and free-wheeling nights, nostalgia in the form of a new and original album.

Speedfossil continues with this theme in the band's makeup, Vandermolen on vocals, guitar, and keyboards, Michael Scott on bass and vocals, Dan Jordan guitar and vocals, and Hector Saint-Hilaire on drums, in the classic 60's-style lineup. And, the album is available on either CD, or audiophile vinyl, with a playlist divided between Side One and Two: the band will be playing live dates while working towards new albums. More info may be found at speedfossil.com or on Facebook as speedfossil.

- Jon Persson



Neil Young
"Summer Songs"

Among all his other attributes, Neil Young sure knows how to celebrate Christmas.

Streaming that day on his eclectic Neil Young Archives web site, this stark, basic, and ultimately passionate and moving release features eight tracks, recorded mostly in 1987 at his former Broken Arrow Ranch in Northern California with Young on all the instruments, particularly acoustic guitar and piano.

SOUND WAVES 19

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The project consists of early versions of songs, many of which feel and sound like demos, although Young calls them “sketches,” that would later appear on 1989’s *Freedom* (“Wrecking Ball,” “Someday,” “Hangin’ on a Limb”), *Harvest Moon* (“One of These Days”), *Psychadelic Pill* (“For the Love of Man”) and CSNY’s 1988 *American Dream* album (“American Dream,” “Name of Love”), plus one song, “Last of His Kind,” that Young debuted at the 1987 Farm Aid concert, but he never officially released.

Many of the songs feature different lyrics, tempos and atmosphere than the final versions released in the few years after this project, and, by and large, are stronger and more forceful, despite their stark presentations, in these somewhat raw forms.

Much like his mentor Bob Dylan, Young has made a cottage industry, and thereby frequently frustrated his long-time fans, out of recording jaw-dropping songs and projects that dwarf many of his commercially-release records, and then shelving them in the can.

Sometimes, when the whim and/or muse hits, he may release them, like this gem, which is, allegedly, a piece of his *Archives Vol.III* release, which possibly/maybe/ could be out later this year.

Don’t hold your breath.

But, until that day, we thankfully have

“Summer Songs.” Lost, but no longer forgotten, it showcases the always mercurial Neil Young at his best.

Merry Christmas, Neil, and thanks!!

- Mark T. Gould



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Ken is the award winning author of The Code Name Series of books. The series is based on his father's experiences behind enemy lines in World War II. He has won awards in the Readers' Favorite contest, The NABE Pinnacle Awards in Military Fiction, and Hollywood, Paris, and New York Book Festivals.

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